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TO AMEMBASSY BANGUI IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 12065 N/A

TAGS: PINS, EAID, SHUM, CT

SUBJECT: STUDENT DEATHS

1. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAS ISSUED FOLLOWING RELEASE WHICH IS BEING CARRIED BY WIRE SERVICES.

2. QUOTE
CHILDREN SLAIN LEAD
PARIS (AP) - THE IMPERIAL GUARD OF EMPEROR BOKASSA I BAYONETED, CLUBBED AND STONED TO DEATH AS MANY AS 100 SCHOOL CHILDREN LAST MONTH IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE BECAUSE THEY PROTESTED WEARING UNIFORMS TO CLASS, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAID TODAY.
THE PARIS SECTION OF THE LONDON-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS ORGAN-
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IZATION SAID THE CHILDREN, AGED 8 TO 16, WERE ROUNDED UP IN

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THE CAPITAL CITY OF BANGUI ON APRIL 18 AND TAKEN TO THE CENTRAL NGARANGBA PRISON TO BE PUNISHED.
THE AMNESTY REPORT SAID THE CHILDREN HAD THROWN STONES AT OFFICIAL CARS, INCLUDING BOKASSA'S.
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, WHICH WON THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IN 1977 FOR ITS WORK ON THE PLIGHT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, CITED "NUMEROUS, VARIED AND RELIABLE SOURCES, BOTH AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN" FOR ITS REPORT ON THE SLAYINGS.
AMNESTY SAID BOKASSA'S GUARDS SWEPT THROUGH THE BANGUI NEIGHBORHOODS OF MALIMAKA, BOY-RABE, ZANDE AND NZAKARA AND ARRESTED SEVERAL HUNDRED CHILDREN.
"SOME OF THE CHILDREN WERE STONED BY THE IMPERIAL GUARDS TO PUNISH THEM FOR HAVING THROWN STONES AT THE IMPERIAL CAR," AMNESTY SAID.
"OTHERS WERE STABBED WITH BAYONETS, OTHERS DIED FROM BLOWS BY CLUBS CONTAINING NAILS. PROBABLY NEARLY 100 CHILDREN WERE KILLED AND BURIED IN A COMMON GRAVE DURING THE NIGHT BY THE GUARDS," THE REPORT SAID.
THE ORGANIZATION SAID THE STUDENTS WERE LOCKED IN SMALL CELLS SEALED SO TIGHTLY THAT ABOUT 20 OF THE CHILDREN SUFFOCATED.
AMNESTY SAID ONE WITNESS ALONE COUNTED 62 BODIES.
THE NEXT DAY, THE 58-YEAR-OLD BOKASSA, WHO DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS "THE FATHER AND PROTECTOR OF THE CHILDREN WHO ARE THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY," ANNOUNCED HE WAS GOING TO FREE THOSE STILL IN CUSTODY.
"IT APPEARS THAT IN FACT SOME WERE RELEASED," AMNESTY SAID. END QUOTE

3. DEPARTMENT HAS DEVELOPED FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE.

4. Q. AP REPORTS FROM PARIS THAT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
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HAS RELEASED INFORMATION PERTAINING TO STUDENT DEATHS AT GOVERNMENT HANDS IN BANGUI, CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE.
WHAT INFORMATION CAN YOU PROVIDE ON THIS SUBJECT, WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO THE REPORT, AND WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S GENERAL VIEW ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE CAE.

- A. WE HAVE RECEIVED REPORTS FROM BANGUI THAT A NUMBER OF YOUNG PERSONS WERE ROUNDED UP AND IMPRISONED IN MID-APRIL. THE REPORTS INCLUDED ALLEGATIONS THAT, WHILE THE

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BULK OF THE STUDENTS AND OTHER YOUNG PERSONS HAD BEEN RELEASED, SOME OF THEM MIGHT HAVE BEEN KILLED WHILE IN CUSTODY. THE RUMORS IN BANGUI RANGED FROM ROUGHLY SEVEN DEAD TO ABOUT FORTY. HOWEVER, WE HAVE HAD NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THESE STORIES, OR INDEED WHETHER ANY DEATHS ACTUALLY OCCURRED.
HOWEVER, IF TRUE, WE WOULD GREATLY REGRET THE REOCCURENCE OF GOVERNMENT VIOLENCE DIRECTED AT THE STUDENT POPULATION ALONG THE LINES OF COMPARABLE EVENTS REPORTED IN BANGUI IN JANUARY. FOLLOWING THAT OCCASION WE EXPRESSED OUR VIEWS WITH CONSIDERABLE CLARITY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CAE. LAST, IT MIGHT BE NOTED THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE HAVE DELETED FROM THE CURRENT FOREIGN ASSISTANCE BILL SOME $685,000 REQUESTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION FOR A RURAL HEALTH PROJECT IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY. THE DELETION HAS ON GROUNDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

5. DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT VANCE

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